DATELINE #82 WASHINGTON, D.C. MAY 26, 1976
ALINA ZERANSKI

AN ORGANIZATION WHICH FIGHTS LONELINESS

(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES -- BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON AN ORGANIZATION WHICH FIGHTS LONELINESS. YOUR REPORTER IS ---------.

NARR: MOST SINGLE PARENTS -- WIDOWED, DIVORCED, SEPARATED, OR NEVER MARRIED -- FEEL THE BURDEN OF THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RAISING A CHILD WITHOUT HELP OF A PARTNER. YET, EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD THERE ARE MILLIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SUCH A SITUATION. THEY SEARCH FOR SOME STABILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY. THEY NEED ADVICE AND SUPPORT. THERE ARE MANY ADJUSTMENTS TO MAKE. IT TAKES COURAGE TO ACCEPT THE CHANGE, TO FIGHT FEAR, INSECURITY AND LONELINESS. VIRGINIA MARTIN IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION WHICH ATTEMPTS TO HELP THEM -- AN ORGANIZATION CALLED PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- MARTIN

"THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION WAS DIRECTED TOWARD RAISING CHILDREN IN A SINGLE PARENT HOME IN A HEALTHY ATMOSPHERE. THE ORGANIZATION THEN DEVELOPED A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR THE PARENTS AS WELL AS THE CHILDREN AND PROVIDING LEGAL INFORMATION... ACTIVITIES FOR BOTH THE PARENTS AND THE CHILDREN. THIS DEVELOPED AND SPREAD INTO DISCUSSION PROGRAMS, FAMILY ACTIVITIES THAT BROUGHT THE PARENTS AND THE CHILDREN TOGETHER. WE ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION CENTER, RESEARCH CENTER, TO AID OTHER SINGLE PARENTS AS WELL AS OUR MEMBERS."

NARR: A NEW MEMBER, JUST ADMITTED TO THE WASHINGTON, D.C., CHAPTER OF THE PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS, REALIZED THAT THE GUILT SHE FELT ABOUT HER MARRIAGE BREAKDOWN INTERFERED IN HER DISCIPLINING THE CHILDREN. SHE WAS OVER-PERMISSIVE AND INDECISIVE. SHE DECIDED TO JOIN THIS ORGANIZATION AFTER HEARING OF THE LECTURES TEACHING HOW TO SAY "NO" TO A CHILD WHEN NECESSARY.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- MARTIN

"THE ORGANIZATION OPERATES WITH OVER 850 CHAPTERS. EACH CHAPTER VARIES IN SIZE FROM 25 TO THE LARGEST CHAPTER OF 4,000 MEMBERS. SO, DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE CHAPTER, THERE ARE MORE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY. IT MAY RANGE FROM ONE OR TWO ACTIVITIES DURING THE WEEK, TO SEVEN OR EIGHT ON A GIVEN NIGHT."

NARR: THE MEMBERSHIP CUTS ACROSS ALL ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS. PEOPLE JOIN BECAUSE THEY FEEL VERY MUCH LOST ON THEIR OWN, AND THEY NEED ALL KINDS OF HELP. HERE THEY CAN LEARN HOW TO LOOK FOR A JOB OR HOW TO SHOP FOR A LOAN. THE ORGANIZATION CAN SUGGEST NEW CAREERS OR WRITE DIRECTLY TO A RETAILER AND ASK WHY THE CREDIT HAS BEEN REFUSED. IT CAN HELP TO FIND RELIABLE PERSONS TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILD WHEN THE FATHER OR MOTHER WORKS. THE DISCUSSION GROUPS OFFER PLENTY OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT. PEOPLE TALK FREELY ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THEY ARE FACING. THEY SEE THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE IN SUCH A SITUATION. THEY HEAR HOW OTHERS TRY TO COPE. MOST OF THE CHAPTERS HAVE A PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY BOARD, CONSISTING OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME. AT THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, HERE IN WASHINGTON, THERE IS ALSO A

NARR: (CONT'D) LIBRARY OF TAPED ADVISORY COUNSELLING PROGRAMS THAT ARE CIRCULATED AMONG THE CHAPTERS.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- MARTIN

"IN 1957, TWO PARENTS, A MAN AND A WOMAN WHO WERE DIVORCED, MET IN NEW YORK CITY. THERE WERE DISCUSSING THE PROBLEMS OF THEIR CHILDREN AND DECIDED THAT THERE WERE MANY OTHER PEOPLE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION. THEY THEN PLACED AN AD IN THE PAPER AND HAD A RESPONSE OF 25 PEOPLE. AND A YEAR LATER, PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS WAS INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK. WE HAVE GROWN FROM THE 25 ORIGINAL PEOPLE TO ALMOST A HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND MEMBERS... IT IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, ALMOST COMPLETELY FUNDED BY DUES PAID TO THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FROM THE MEMBERS. AND THE DUES PROVIDE EACH MEMBER WITH THE SUBSCRIPTION, A YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION TO THE MAGAZINE, AND INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR THE CHAPTER, AND A NUMBER OF BENEFITS TO THE MEMBERS."

NARR: THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHES TEN ISSUES A YEAR. MANY UNIVERSITIES AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS SUBSCRIBE TO IT. IT CONSISTS OF ABOUT THIRTY PAGES OF INTERESTING, USEFUL ARTICLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS. THERE ARE NO ADVERTISEMENTS. BARBARA CHASE, A YOUNG AND ENTHUSIASTIC JOURNALIST IS EDITOR OF THE SINGLE PARENT MAGAZINE.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- CHASE

"THE FIFTH WHEEL SYNDROME IS OUR PHRASE FOR HOW YOU FEEL WHEN YOU ARE SINGLE IN A COUPLE ORIENTED SOCIETY. YOU DO FEEL DIFFERENT AND IT IS A NEW ADJUSTMENT TO MAKE. SO WE TRY TO HELP PEOPLE FEEL MORE INTEGRATED AND LESS STRANGE AND ODD IN THEIR SOCIAL SITUATIONS."

NARR: MANY ARTICLES DEAL WITH CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES AND CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN WHO ARE SUFFERING A LOSS OF ONE PARENT. THERE IS ALSO PLENTY OF INFORMATION ABOUT MONEY ASPECTS OF WIDOWHOOD OR DIVORCE AND GUIDELINES ON

NARR: (CONT'D) HOW TO LIVE AGAIN A CONSTRUCTIVE, PRODUCTIVE AND SATISFACTORY LIFE.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- CHASE

"WE TRY TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE NOT TO RUSH INTO REMARRIAGE, TO TAKE THEIR TIME AND TO BECOME WHOLE PEOPLE AGAIN, AND TO EXPERIENCE THE EXHILARATION OF FEELING INDEPENDENT AND ABLE TO COPE ON THEIR OWN WITHOUT LEANING ON ANOTHER PERSON. OUR WHOLE APPROACH IS THAT IN TELLING YOU WHEN YOU'VE REACHED THAT STAGE OF FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF BY YOURSELF, YOU FOR SURE ARE NOT READY TO THINK ABOUT REMARRIAGE."

NARR: THE ORGANIZATION GREW AND IT HAS BECOME INTERNATIONAL. NEW CHAPTERS WERE SET UP IN ENGLAND. THERE ARE ALMOST 10,000 AFFILIATES IN AUSTRALIA. MATERIALS ARE SUPPLIED TO SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, IN BELGIUM AND ISRAEL. JOINING PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS IS THE FIRST STEP ON THE ROAD TO ADJUSTMENT IN A DIFFICULT PERIOD THAT FOLLOWS WIDOWHOOD, DIVORCE OR SEPARATION. CHILDREN SEE THAT THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER CHILDREN FROM SINGLE PARENT HOMES, AND THEY CAN HAVE HAPPY LIVES. SINGLE PARENTS FIND HERE COMPANY AND FRIENDSHIP.

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